



ARIZONA STATE SENATE
Fifty-Second Legislature, Second Regular Session

FACT SHEET FOR S.B. 1239

schools; state seal of biliteracy

Purpose

An emergency measure that creates the State Seal of Biliteracy program recognizing high school students who achieve proficiency in English plus at least one additional language.

Background

The State Seal of Biliteracy is an award typically given by a state department of education or a local school district to recognize students who demonstrate proficiency in English plus one or more other languages prior to high school graduation. A seal is placed on a qualifying student's high school diploma and is noted on their transcript. Currently, 13 states plus the District of Columbia have an established Seal of Biliteracy program (Seal of Biliteracy.org).

The State Board of Education (SBE) is responsible for supervising and regulating Arizona's public school system and implementing policies to accomplish this purpose. In particular, SBE establishes curriculum and minimum competency requirements for students to graduate from high school (A.R.S. § 15-203).

There is no anticipated fiscal impact to the state General Fund associated with this legislation.

Provisions

1. Establishes, if sufficient funding is available, a State Seal of Biliteracy program to recognize students who:
 - a) attain a high level of proficiency in English plus one or more additional languages pursuant to approved assessments; and
 - b) graduate from a school district or a charter school.
2. Directs the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to:
 - a) create a State Seal of Biliteracy that will be placed on a qualifying student's high school diploma and noted on their transcript; and
 - b) deliver the State Seal of Biliteracy to each participating school district or charter school.
3. Allows any school district or charter school to voluntarily participate in the State Seal of Biliteracy program by notifying the SPI.

4. Requires each participating school district or charter school to:
 - a) identify the students who meet the applicable program requirements; and
 - b) place the State Seal of Biliteracy on a qualifying student's high school diploma and note it on their transcript.
5. Requires a participating school district or charter school to award a high school diploma with a State Seal of Biliteracy to a student who meets the following requirements:
 - a) completes all graduation requirements in English Language Arts with at least a cumulative 2.0 grade point average in those courses on a 4.0 scale or equivalent;
 - b) passes the English Language Arts end-of-course examinations;
 - c) demonstrates proficiency in one or more languages, other than English, on an assessment adopted by SBE and the Department of Education (ADE); and
 - d) achieves a proficient score or higher on English language proficiency assessments, if the student is an English language learner.
6. Requires SBE in collaboration with ADE to adopt a list of assessments, using research-based methodology, to determine a student's proficiency in a language other than English.
7. Permits SBE in collaboration with ADE to adopt the necessary regulations to implement the State Seal of Biliteracy program.
8. Terminates the program on July 1, 2026.
9. Becomes effective on the signature of the Governor, if the emergency clause is enacted.

Prepared by Senate Research

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